

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

## Bible drillers experience agony, ecstasy

By Tony Martin  
Associate Editor

It may not have been a do-or-die proposition, but for the young people participating in the statewide Bible drill and speakers tournament, the pressure was significant.

The event was held April 28 at Alta Woods Church in Jackson and was sponsored by the Discipleship and Family Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Students participating at this level of competition were among the "best of the best" in Mississippi. Now the students were competing against each other.

Bible drill participants paced the floor, riffling the pages of their Bibles.

Chase Temple, from Magnolia Church, Jones Association, said, "This is my second year in the tournament. I'm going into the ministry, and I believe I'm called by God to do this."

James Mullis, from Easthaven Church in Brookhaven, said, "Preparing my speech is the

best learning experience I've ever had. I've got a background in forensic speech, and that helped. Initially, I didn't want to do this. I just sat down at the computer, though, and God gave me what to say."



**SPEAKER'S TOURNAMENT WINNERS** — The state tournament was the end of a challenging road for the four top place winners. They are (from left): David Buys, fourth place; David Thompson, third place; James Mullis, second place; and Chase Temple, first place. (Photo by Tony Martin)

David Thompson, from First Church, Clinton, echoed Mullis' sentiments. "I learned so much putting all this together. My sister who had participated in the speaker's tournament was a great influence on me."

All the participants said the stress level was high. Even though most of them had given their speech several times, today's competition was the culmination of all their work. According to David Buys, from First Church, Brandon, "I've worked hard and have a peace about this. I've done all I know to prepare. This has been a great opportunity to share and to meet people."

Speaker's tournament winners were Temple, first place; Mullis, second place; Thompson, third place; and Buys, fourth place.

Other participants in the state tournament were Hanna Lott, of First Church, Sumrall, and Shanna Jones, of Cherry Creek Church, Pontotoc.

The scholarship level of Bible drills was open to students who had participated in Bible drills for nine years. Jennifer Kearschner of Improve Church, Marion Association, took first place honors; Kathryn Wallace of Rocky Creek Church, George Association, placed second; and Kellie Pickens, Liberty Church, Union Association, placed third.

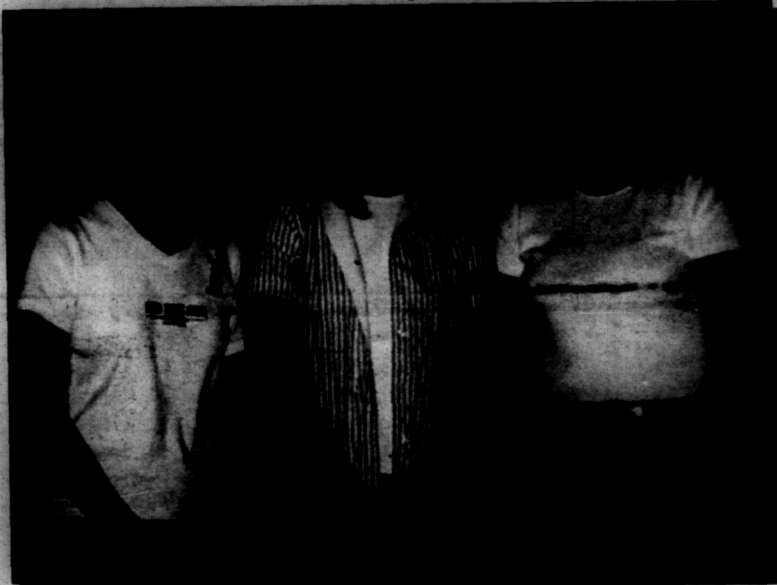
Mississippi Baptist colleges

made significant scholarships available for participants at this level of competition.

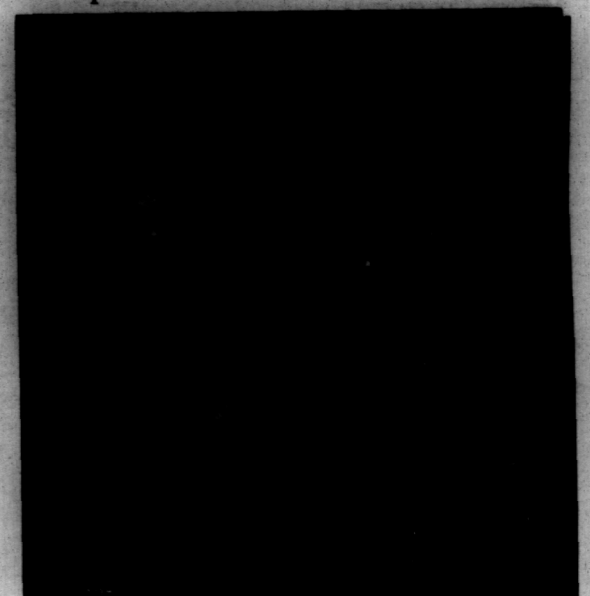
Blue Mountain College offered a \$1000 renewable scholarship for the first place winner in both events, with a \$600 scholarship for the second and third place winners.

Mississippi College offered four years room and board for the first place winner and four years of "room" for the

second and third place winners. William Carey College offered four years of full tuition to the first place winner; four years room and board to the second place winner; and four years of "room" for the third place winner.



**BIBLE DRILL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS** — These students had to have participated in nine years of Bible drill to be eligible for scholarships to Mississippi Baptist schools. Pictured (from left) Jennifer Kearschner, first place; Kathryn Wallace, second place; and Kellie Pickens, third place. (Photo by Tony Martin)



**FRIEND OF BIBLE DRILLS** — Peggy Lee (left), of First Church, Clinton, is given the Friend of Bible Drills award by Marcus Peagler, director of the Discipleship and Family Ministry department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. (Photo by Tony Martin)

In the junior high Bible drill, Richard Goldman of New Bethel Church, Neshoba Association, placed first; Bryan Martin of Rolling Hills Church, Pearl River Association, placed second; and Danielle Ellis of Rolling Hills Church, Pearl River Association, placed third.

Peggy Lee of First Church, Clinton, was given the Friends of Bible Drill award. This special honor is given annually to the person who has best exemplified the spirit and commitment to the Bible drill ministry in the local church.



**JUNIOR HIGH BIBLE DRILL WINNERS** — Competition was stiff for the three top winners in the junior high drill. They are (from left) Richard Goldman, first place; Bryan Martin, second place; and Danielle Ellis, third place. (Photo by Tony Martin)

### WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

BSA numbers rise

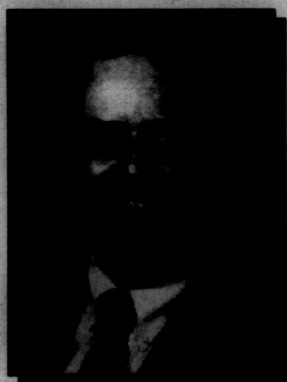
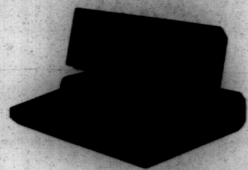
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# The power of new life

I was seated in a Mississippi Baptist church a few Sundays ago awaiting the start of the morning worship service when something quite ordinary occurred, but it moved me deeply.

The experience started when I heard a barely audible rustling and then quiet whispers behind me. As I turned in the pew to see what was causing such a stir, there at the back of the sanctuary stood a proud grandfather holding his weeks-old grandchild.

It was obvious that this was the infant's first visit to Grandpa's church. As the pair made their way slowly down the center aisle of the sanctuary, pew after pew of people emptied to crowd around the child.

Other grandfathers congratulated the new grandfather. Grandmothers beamed. Children strained on tip-toes to get a good look at the baby.

Almost to a person, churchgoers in the sanctuary that day did something that I found as intriguing as it is commonplace — they all felt the need to gently cup their hand around the top of the child's delicate head and hold it there for as long as possible.

As soon as one hand was removed, another hand carefully fell into place on the baby's head.

Some people took longer than others to complete this spontaneous act, but all felt the same need to touch the child in that special way.

Although I have seen people do that hundreds of times with newborns — and have done it myself more times than I can remember — this particular instance stirred my thinking.

Why do people cup their hand around a baby's head like that? Do we seek some supernatural experience? Are we attempting to impart our personal blessing to this child? Are we vicariously reliving our first days as parent or grandparent?

Then it hit me. The explanation is as simple as the gesture itself — it is the power of new life. Human life is impor-

tant, after all. Everyone wanted to touch that baby because life matters.

Even after three decades of intense cultural indoctrination on the absolute irrelevance of individual human life and the "right" to rid ourselves of it as we please, people still believe human life is important.

Even after being told over and over again that what grows inside a mother is nothing more than "tissue" (Kleenex?) that can be "discarded" (trash?) at will, we know better.

We know better, not because medical science has produced full-color, real-time video of the child moving inside its mother's womb. We know better, not because perfectly-formed infants are often accidentally born during the attempt to abort them.

We know better, because of what we feel deep inside our souls.

We know that what forms at the instant of conception is God-breathed human life. We know that it is human life, throughout the nine gestational months. We know that what is born at the end of those nine months is human life.

If it is not human life, why must it be killed to prevent it from growing? Why do abortion supporters clinically refer to that new life as a "fetus," while the rest of us refer to it as a baby? How out of touch can one become?

Of course it's a baby. Yet the slaughter continues, unabated.

So it will be on Mother's Day 2001 that I will say a special prayer for all the babies who never had a chance to go to church with their grandfathers. I will say a special prayer for all the children who

## TRIBUTE TO A VIGILANTE



## CELEBRATE MOTHER'S DAY Sunday, May 13

were cheated of the thrill of catching their first frog, or hearing the crack as their bat meets ball for the first time.

I will say a special prayer for the grandfathers and grandmothers and fathers and mothers whose empty arms ache for their missing children and grandchildren. I will say a special prayer that this modern American Holocaust will one day be seen for what it truly is.

Then I think I'll find a newborn child and, for a few fleeting moments, cup my hand around its precious little head.

## IN MY VIEW:

### On mothers and motherhood

By Tony Martin, Associate Editor

American in space, and now take for granted that having a tourist named Tito on the International Space Station is a logical outgrowth of that first flight. We're all made up of the bits and pieces of people we've known, events in our lives, and products of the culture around us.

If you grew up in a household with your mother, however, then I can tell you why you're the way you are. It's primarily because of your mom.

You're not alone if you recognize just how much your mother meant or means to you. Abraham Lincoln said, "All I am or can be I owe to my angel mother."

George Washington said,

"My mother was the most beautiful woman I ever saw. All I am I owe to my mother. I attribute all my success in life to the moral, intellectual, and physical education I received from her."

Consider Mary, the most famous mother of them all. Soon after the visit of the shepherds to the manger, Mary "treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." At the temple, Simeon told Mary, "a soul will pierce your own soul too."

When Jesus was found teaching in the temple as a boy, Mary "treasured all these things in her heart." As Jesus was dying on the cross, he said to Mary, "Dear woman, here is your son." To John, standing close

by: "Here is your mother." Even in those last moments, Jesus was concerned with his family.

Only a mother can fully understand Mary's emotions and thoughts as she considered her son. While Jesus was unquestionably the Son of God, I can't help but believe that so much of who he was came as a result of the nurture he received at his mother's knee.

Thank God for the mothers in your life. If your mother is still with you, let her know how much you love and appreciate her. Pray for the mother of your children; it can be a challenging job. If you are a mother, thank God for loaning children for you to encourage and be an example. I love what a young mother said at the side of her newborn's cradle: "Who is getting more pleasure from this rocking, the baby or me?"

Family and motherhood is about loving our loved ones, nothing more, nothing less. We don't know how much time God will allow us to be with them. The only reward we'll get in this life is the quality of our relationships. When our lives are ultimately evaluated, it all comes down to this.



# Christian musician seeks to help Sudanese

COSTA MESA, Calif. (BP) — It was just another benefit dinner, or so Ken Tamplin thought. He told his wife they would go, make a donation, and be home in time to tuck their two children in to bed. What he saw that night changed his life.

"Raiders went into a village, murdered parents in front of their children, then forced the children to make a 30-mile trek on foot," Tamplin recalled about a video depicting the persecution of the southern Sudanese people.

Since civil war began in 1983, more than 2 million people have died and 4 million people have been tortured, raped, and sold into slavery. The war pits Arabs in the north against Africans — primarily Christians and animists — in the south.

Tensions are rooted in attempts to impose Islamic val-

ery. They were raped repeatedly by about a dozen men every night. One man tried to buy back his daughters, but he only had enough money for one."

The images and stories haunted Tamplin.

"What if I ever had to ask myself which child would I leave? I said, 'Lord, there's no one I know — Christian or not — who can sit back and allow this to happen if they have any compassion and ability at all.'"

Tamplin, a three-time Dove Award-winning song-

writer who also has written music for The Perfect Storm and X-

Files, set to work on a project called Make Me Your Voice.

Released by Spring Hill Music Group in Nashville, Tenn., the CD compiles songs written with the persecuted Sudanese in mind. Spring Hill's president, Scott Chancey, said, "We have a responsibility as Christians to speak out for those who cannot, to be a voice for the voiceless. Ken Tamplin has assembled some of the top worship leaders from across the U.S. to participate, and we have provided listeners with not only a way to help this war-torn nation, but also with a great worship recording as well."

Fifteen worship leaders from such churches as Willow Creek Community Church in suburban Chicago, Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., and Church on

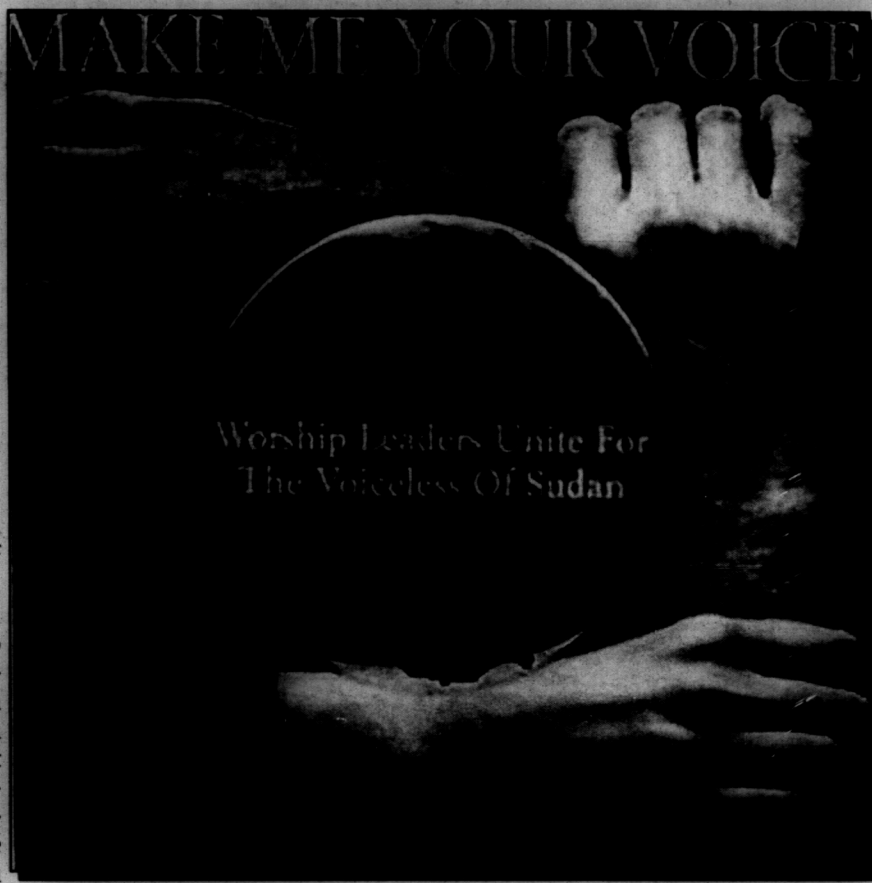
the Rock in St. Peters, Mo., wrote songs and performed them for the project.

Other artists on Make Me Your Voice include Andrae Crouch and Charlie Peacock.

Church on the Rock worship leader Kyle McCarty co-wrote a song with Tamplin, who is part of the worship team at Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, Calif.

"We Love You, Lord," just came to me at a time when I was at the piano worshipping the Lord," McCarty said. "Christ says, 'If you love me, feed my sheep.' We want to touch the Sudanese people and help them any way we can."

"There aren't a lot of opportunities to be a music missionary, and this is one route that makes it possible."



MAKE ME YOUR VOICE — Most Americans are vaguely aware of the severe persecution of Christians in Sudan. The CD Make Me Your Voice (Spring Hill) brings their plight to listeners' attention. It is the first in a series of releases from which 100% of artists' and producers' proceeds go to aid the Sudanese people. (Photo by Stacey Hamby)

ues on all Sudanese people.

"One two-year-old boy was crying, and he couldn't keep up. The toddler's captors beat him to death with the butt of their guns."

"They sold girls no older

## Pressure mounts on Sudan

WASHINGTON (BP) — Sudan's 15-year civil war not only has killed more than 2 million people, but also the spread of HIV/AIDS. Charles Janda, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and former head of the All African Conference of Churches, said April 26 in Washington, Janda said civil wars throughout Africa are, in fact, directly responsible for much of the spread of HIV/AIDS, which is in epidemic proportion on the continent. Young people are trained to fight and given cocaine and other drugs, fueling them toward rape and thus spreading HIV/AIDS. The Sudanese government wants to push the Dinka people from their region and create a new Muslim state, Janda also noted. "They want to depopulate the area which has much oil and uranium [in order to] buy more arms," he said. For many years before the government's destabilization policies, Muslims and Christians basically lived in peace in both northern and southern Sudan. Now, he said, Christians in the north are severely persecuted. "The government does not allow the church to build new churches or to repair damaged ones. Church people are restricted in travel, and church visitors are vetted [investigated] while the Muslims are free to work and travel wherever they want," Janda outlined three ways the international Christian community can aid the Sudanese cause.

1. Pray for the Sudanese people. 2. Donate money to help them. 3. Donate blood to help them.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

## The Record

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## Looking back

### 10 years ago

Unusually heavy spring flood waters in the Delta area and in areas of north Mississippi lead to the activation of the Disaster Relief Unit of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The unit's volunteers dish up 1,616 meals on the first day of service.

### 20 years ago

Harry Hollis, a Southern Baptist family specialist, challenges NBC's plans to air a prime-time situation comedy featuring Tony Randall as a homosexual. "(T)hey should stop attacking the family which is one of the strongholds necessary to the survival of this society," Hollis says.

### 30 years ago

Southern Baptist evangelism reaches the campus of Princeton University in New Jersey when a revival led by Ralph Landry, youth evangelist from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, brings 50 decisions, including eight professions of faith.



# BSA numbers up despite homosexual flap

IRVING, Texas (BP) — Despite ongoing controversy over its refusal to accept acknowledged homosexuals as leaders, a national spokesman said the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) recorded an increase in participation last year.

A total of 4,941,000 youth ages 6-18 were involved in Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and "Learning for Life," a classroom instructional program, as of Dec. 31, 2000 — up slightly over the 4,933,000 involved at the end of 1999.

The number of adult volunteers rose dramatically last year, to 1,489,000, an increase of 15%, over the 1999 year-end total of 1,290,000.

The only drop occurred in the Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers programs, by just over one percent, from 3,392,000 to 3,351,000. The Scouts' national spokesman, Gregg Shields, attributed the latter to demographic trends.

"We see those numbers static for the next few years," Shields said. "Then they will pick up in mid-decade, due to increases in immigration and minority populations."

This picture is at odds with recent news media reports portraying the Scouts as under siege for refusing to abandon their policy against homosexual scoutmasters.

Most notably, an April 1 installment of CBS' "60 Minutes" said the Scouts were losing members, money, and sponsors after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the group's ban on homosexual leaders last June.

Reporter Lesley Stahl cited several United Way agencies eliminating funds, the loss of \$300,000 in city and county grants in Broward County, Fla., and several churches and synagogues that have stopped sponsoring troops.

Shields noted, however, that the estimated two dozen United Way chapters that have eliminated funding represent less than two percent of the United Way's 1,400 affiliates.

60 Minutes' Broward County report, meanwhile, overlooked a key development. While the local United Way has cut funding, specially designated gifts will replace almost all of the loss in the coming year.

"My understanding is we'll receive almost as much in designated giving as allocated giving," said Jeff Herrmann of the South Florida Council, which is awaiting official notification from United Way.

For the fiscal year ending April 30, the council received \$128,000 from the agency, which has voted to no longer provide money to Boy Scouts from general allocations.

Herrmann said other recent donations have boosted finances for the council, which serves a three-county area stretching through the Florida Keys.

The new finances include more than \$110,000 in donations or pledges from a dozen churches and \$40,000 from a retired businessman.

and packs but 70% of them quickly found new homes, he said. Although an injunction later overturned the school board's action, a great deal of confusion

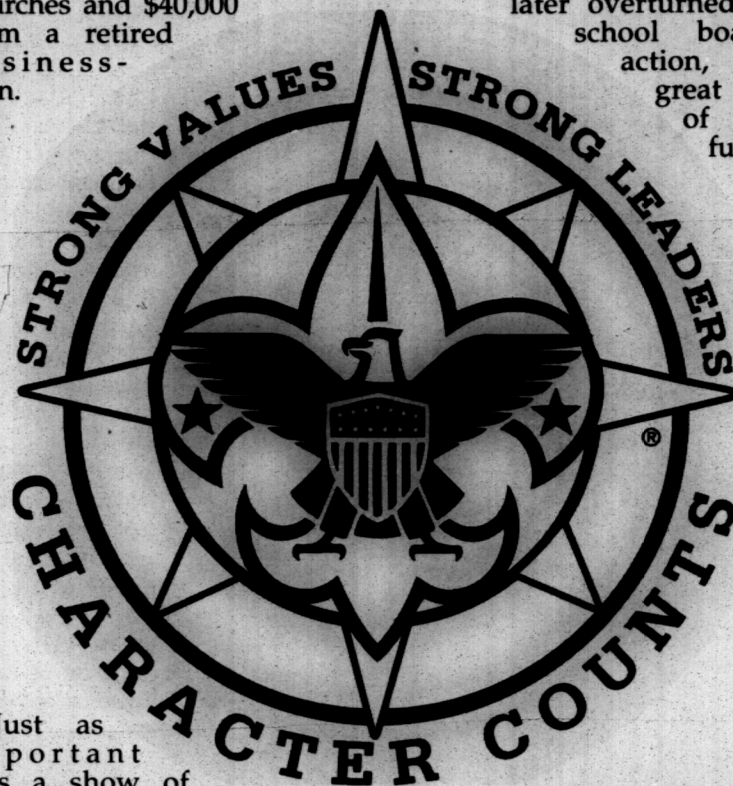
Some of the churches have enjoyed the relationship and are saying, "Stay here."

Among other significant gifts received by Scouts groups in recent months, Shields noted, are a pair of anonymous donations to the Pittsburgh, Pa., council for \$1.5 million and a \$1.2 million gift to the National Parks Council in Provo, Utah.

Since the 300 independent councils raise their own funds, Shields said he doesn't know whether all those affected by United Way cuts have been able to make up the difference.

In mid-April, USA Today reported that BSA refused to renew the Scouting charter of a Baptist church in Chapel Hill, N.C. The newspaper said that Olin T. Binkley Memorial Church, which had sponsored a Cub pack and Scout troop for 39 years, wanted to honor its anti-discrimination policy, which conflicted with the Scouts' policy.

The church, formerly affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), was one of two congregations that prompted the SBC to amend its constitution in 1993 to prevent affiliation by churches that affirm homosexuality.



Just as important was a show of support from area churches after the Broward County school board voted last November to oust Scouts programs from school property, Herrmann said.

That affected about 65 troops

existed before BSA went to court, causing nine groups to fold, he said.

"The churches really came to our rescue," Herrmann said. "They said, 'Until this gets sorted out, meet in our [buildings].'"

## Court systems used as battleground for Scouts' stance on homosexuality

CHICAGO (BP) — In a ruling that has both sides claiming victory, an Illinois appeals court overturned a lower court decision that had found the Chicago Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) discriminated in its hiring practices.

On May 1, a three-judge panel at Chicago's First District of the Illinois Appellate Court reversed a 1999 decision that had ordered the Scouts to stop barring homosexual applicants. While the case was sent back to the Chicago Commission on Human Relations for further proceedings, New York attorney George Davidson is confident it will ultimately be resolved in favor of the Scouts.

He noted that the plaintiff, Keith Richardson, had not been an authentic job applicant but had merely talked to the Chicago council of BSA for the purpose of filing a discrimination complaint. In acting as a "tester," the appeals court found his claim wasn't valid, the lawyer said. He said the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling last June that upheld a prohibition against homosexual scoutmasters was a key to the May 1 Illinois decision.

The high court overturned a ruling by the New Jersey Supreme Court that said assistant scoutmaster James Dale was entitled to remain a member despite his avowed support of homosexual rights.

Davidson called it significant that the case established that the Chicago council does not bar homosexuals from all employment, just from professional scoutmaster positions.

"It only [relates] to positions of professional scoutmasters," he said. "It's not a broad policy. It's a narrow policy, which the Supreme Court upheld in its case. There would be no discrimination against a computer operator or janitor."

National spokesman Gregg Shields also reacted favorably to the ruling, saying BSA's position in the case should have been dismissed at the trial level.

"We're pleased that in vacating the injunction issued by the human relations commission that the court recognized the Chicago Area Council's right to decline to employ openly homosexual persons as professional scoutmasters," he said.

However, Richardson's Chicago attorney termed the ruling a triumph for his client.

"The appellate court decision was a significant victory for Mr. Richardson, as well as the public at large," said Chip Peters. "What the court held is that the Supreme Court's decision in Dale does not apply to all employment positions, and that the Boy Scouts can't simply hide behind the Dale position in discriminating against gays or lesbians for any employment."

Unless the Boy Scouts decide to appeal the ruling — Davidson said no decision has been made — Peters plans to contest the case further.

He said he will introduce evidence at a future commission hearing that the Chicago council had refused to consider his client for any position. Despite the written policy, Peters said an employee had written a memo saying she had been instructed not to follow that policy.

The case goes back to 1992, when Richardson complained to the commission that the Scouts had discriminated against him on the basis of his sexual orientation. Background included in the court ruling included this summation:

The plaintiff had participated in the Boy Scouts as a youth and attained the highest rank — Eagle Scout. He also became involved in various leadership roles and attained honors.

In his early 20s, after acknowledging he was a homosexual, he was asked to resign from the Scouts. He was not allowed to return to the Scouts, and his name was removed from the list of former scouts. He was also asked to resign from the Scouts, and his name was removed from the list of former scouts.

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## Nominations sought for Miss. posts

The Committee on Nominations of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will begin work soon to fill trustee and board member positions. According to William Stewart, committee chair and pastor of First Church, Eupora, there are a limited number of vacancies to be filled on the following boards and commissions:

- Board of Ministerial Education
- Christian Action Comm.
- Education Commission
- Historical Commission
- Baptist Children's Village
- Baptist Health Systems, Inc. (Jackson)
- Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (Memphis)
- Blue Mountain College
- Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The nominating committee will work in conjunction with the heads of institutions and agencies in bringing a list of nominees to be approved by members at the 2001 annual meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, to be held October 30-31 at First Church, Jackson.

Nomination forms can be obtained by contacting the Office of Executive Director-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bcb@mbcb.org.

Completed forms should be received in the Office of the Executive Director-Treasurer (Attention: Nominating Committee), no later than June 25.



## MARVELOUS MENTORS

Sunday is Mother's Day. Some mothers will be visited; others will be called, pampered, gifted, and loved. Some can only be remembered. For nearly all of us, mom has been a God-given mentor.

Well over a decade ago, the word mentor came into heavy usage in America. People in business, education, church, and sports, talked about others serving as mentors. It is still a very important concept and often pointed to as being needed.

The word mentor refers to someone who serves as an instructor, a coach, or an example. It refers to someone who knows what to do and also does what he knows.

According to the Bible, God has a plan of mentoring. For every child, God has designed two primary mentors and they are called mom and dad or mother and father. I have never heard of, and certainly have never met, a perfect mom or dad. On the other hand, I have met some wonderful and Godly parents who have served as those kinds of role models for their children.



## Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer  
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Such mentors shape and influence their children before they know they are being shaped, and far beyond their understanding of parental influence. I do not remember being taught to walk, talk, or how to brush my teeth, but I know who taught me!

The Bible states it this way: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The word that is translated *train* is filled with implications and clear indications that parents are to be mentors.

Train does not mean just to lecture your child. Children are deaf. Maybe not all of them, but most of them cannot hear when a parent tells them to do something that is contrary to the lifestyle of the parent.

Training has to do with the development of an appetite for doing right things. I went to church before I knew where I was going! I learned to eat good food before I knew I could refuse it! I memorized verses before I realized it was hard to do! Kids do like their parents/mentors.

I remember a father talking with me and asking my advice concerning his son who had been caught smoking marijuana. The father was angry, disappointed, and hurt. He explained to me that they had never had any drugs around their kids and he could not imagine why his son would have been inclined to do drugs.

"We took them to church, told them not to do anything like that, and we tried to raise

them right," he said. On and on he went with this logic.

Since I knew the man so well, I just reached over and thumped the pocket on his shirt. He looked down and I said, "That's where he learned." The father, who had spent the lifetime of this child lighting up tobacco in front of him, made the connection — now his son was involved in lighting up to smoke marijuana.

Mother's Day is certainly a good time for us to remember to pay tribute and to give thanks for our good, God-guided mentors — both mom and dad. Both of my parents are in the Father's House now, and I am so thankful for all they left with me. Neither of them were, nor are any of us, perfect. Yet, God can still use us! If they had deficiencies, we can determine not to repeat them. If they had strong qualities, why not recommit to passing those on to your family.

In a world of warped heroes and bad examples, we can stand tall and be God's mentors in the home.

Give thanks for the mom and dad mentor he gave you, and be the best one you can possibly be!

## Singles help in community special projects

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) — Christian singles from across the metro Jackson area gathered April 29 at the Clarion Inn in Jackson for Make a Difference Day, a celebration of the Christian single life and an opportunity to volunteer for community projects.

Approximately 40 participants from the Metro Jackson area, including Larry [name] of the Metro Association, and [name] of the [name] Church, were present.

The [name] family, [name] and [name] were also present.

## Luter: reaching men for Christ important issue

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — The best way to reach the family for Christ is to first reach the man of the household for Christ, New Orleans pastor Fred Luter said during a chapel service at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Luter, preaching from Mark 2:1-5, told students at the Louisville, Ky., campus how his church, Franklin Avenue Church, was a mission church with only 65 members when he became pastor there in 1986.

Today it is a healthy autonomous church with more than 6,000 members, and Luter credits much of its growth to a deliberate effort to reach out to the men of the community.

"I wanted to reach men for Jesus Christ, because I'm convinced that if you save the man, the man will save his family," said Luter, who will be the first African American to deliver the convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention this June in New Orleans.

When he became Franklin Avenue's pastor, the majority of the church members were women, Luter recounted.

"We had 65 members," he said. "Out of those 65 members you could count the men on one hand. I wanted to reach men."

"I said, 'Ladies, I promise that if you will allow me to have a passion and a ministry for reaching men, you will benefit. The family will benefit. The church will benefit.'"

"So we tried everything we could do. [But] we couldn't reach any men. We knocked on doors. We passed out flyers."

Nothing worked. Luter decided that the community's men "might not like to come to church, but [they] like sporting events."

Luter spread the word that he would be hosting a men's social at his house one weekend to watch a pay-per-view boxing match.



REACHING MEN — New Orleans pastor Fred Luter preaches in chapel at Southern Seminary. Luter, who is pastor of the 6,000-member Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, will deliver this year's convention sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans. (Photo by Norman Sneed)

Forty-five men showed up for the social. After the fight, Luter stood up, introduced himself as the new pastor, and invited the men to church. The following Sunday five of the men came to church, leading Luter to publicly recognize them for attending.

"The ladies stood up and gave them a hand-clap," he said. "They were so excited to see men in the church. ...Those guys started inviting other men. Before you knew it, we had our first male chorus."

"I tell pastors all the time, 'Reaching men is a win-win situation, because men draw other men, but not only that, men draw [the] women.'"

Luter's effort to reach the men of the community is what he called "being creative" in reaching the lost. Luter said a bib-

lical example of this can be found in Mark 2:1-5, where four men attempt to bring a paralytic to Jesus.

Facing a crowd of people, the four men climb on top of a house, open the roof and lower the paralytic to Jesus.

"These four men were trying to get their friend to Jesus Christ by any means necessary," Luter said. "They go to the front door but they can't get in. They go to the back door but they can't get in. They said, 'We've got to get this man to Christ,' so they got creative."

Luter said Christians today should follow the example of the four men.

"The [Gospel] message never changes," he said. "It's always the same yesterday, today, and forevermore, but if we are going to reach this generation ...we've got to change our methods. We must be creative in reaching the lost."

Not only were the four men in the biblical account creative, but they were also caring, cooperative, and committed, Luter said, noting that they cared for the paralytic despite the possibility that they had other things to do.

"Do we care for the people in our community?" Luter asked. "Do we care for the people in our neighborhoods? Do we care for those in our cities?"

"Lost people will not come if we invite them to church, but they'll come if we bring them to church. We've got to show them that we care."

"They need to know that we care about their hurts [and that] we care about their struggles."

Chapel messages can be heard on the seminary's website at [http://www.sbts.edu/news/audio/speakers\\_chapel.html](http://www.sbts.edu/news/audio/speakers_chapel.html).



# SBC annual meeting to convene in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (BP and local reports) — An emphasis on personal evangelism and a report from the new Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Council on Family Life are on the agenda for the SBC's June 12-13 annual meeting at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

This year's convention will feature a new Wednesday afternoon session, set for 3 p.m., to replace the Wednesday evening session, SBC officials have announced. As a result, the final convention session will end around 6 p.m.

"We believe messengers will appreciate the flexibility this schedule will provide, whether in opportunities for fellowship with Baptist friends that night or a chance to return home on a Wednesday evening flight," said Jerry Johnson, chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

The International Mission Board will present its annual report on Tuesday afternoon and the North American Board on Wednesday morning.

The theme of the meeting, "Until He Comes...Go!" is taken from Luke 19:13: "So he called ten of his servants and gave them ten minas. 'Put this money to work,' he said. 'until I come back.'"

Of particular note is a report from the Council on Family Life, created last year by SBC Executive Committee President and Chief Executive Officer Morris H. Chapman.

The committee, chaired by Tom Elliff, a former SBC president and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., was

created to spearhead initiatives to build a heightened awareness of the needs of families throughout the SBC and to work in cooperation with other SBC agencies to provide needed resources and materials for local churches.

James Dobson, founder and president of Focus on the Family, will speak during the Wednesday afternoon session of the annual meeting. Dobson's remarks will dovetail a report delivered by the SBC Council on Family Life.

The week prior to the SBC, the annual Crossover evangelistic effort coordi-

nated by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Louisiana Baptists will penetrate metro New Orleans with the gospel.

In addition, a number of satellite meetings, such as the annual Pastors' Conference and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) meeting, will be held Sunday and Monday prior to the SBC annual meeting.

At the WMU meeting, Kimberly

Cole of Brandon will be recognized as one of only six Acteens Panelists to be invited to attend the SBC annual meeting.

The two-day schedule for the annual meeting will mean messengers wanting to introduce resolutions for consideration must do so before the start of the Tuesday afternoon session. Messengers

who want to have resolutions considered are urged to send them before the annual meeting to the Resolutions Committee c/o Convention Relations, Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St., Nashville, TN 37203.

The registration of messengers will open at 4 p.m. on Sunday, June 10, and at 8 a.m. on the following Monday through Wednesday.

Messengers must be credentialed by their respective churches. According to SBC Bylaw 8, the church's clerk or moderator must sign the familiar messenger card, "the best credential."

The messenger card may be obtained from state convention offices or the local association office in some states. A messenger is similar to a delegate elected by a local church but traditionally has not been instructed by the church.

SBC officials emphasized that most state conventions do not automatically send the cards to churches, which is the case in Mississippi. The churches must request the messenger cards from their state convention offices.

To obtain messenger information, contact the Office of the Executive Director-Treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3201 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 201. E-mail: bboxes@mbcb.org.





# 'Next generation' takes center stage at Pastors Conf.

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — The next generation of pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention will take to the pulpit June 10-11 in what Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference President Jerry Spencer said will be "an old-fashioned Holy Ghost meeting."

"As you know, there are literally thousands of outstanding pulpiteers in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)," Spencer wrote in a letter to pastors. "Selecting this year's preachers has been done prayerfully with a keen desire to have a cross-section representation of our grassroots constituency."

"These are all 'hot-hearted' preachers — guys who are going to preach out their heart," said Spencer, a retired pastor and evangelist from Dothan, Ala., in an interview with SBC Life, the journal of the SBC Executive Committee.

"We also want to reach out to our younger pastors this year. There is a great host of young men who are coming into the ministry. These men need to be challenged and encouraged in the great primary work of the ministry."

The theme of the SBC Pastors' Conference will reflect the theme of the June 13-14 Southern Baptist Convention, "Until He Comes... Go!"

"We're going to emphasize evangelism — being personal soul-winners and evangelism in your church," Spencer told SBC Life.

Each message will focus on a "Go!" theme, with the opening session Sunday evening, for example, including messages on Go Quickly, Go Joyfully, Go Together and Go with Vision, preached by Frank Cox, Bob Pitman, Rick Gage, and Jerry Falwell, respectively.

Spencer reminded pastors to arrive at the conference early on June 10. Pre-session music will begin at 5:40

p.m. and will feature eight choirs from across the country. Jack Price of McKenzie, Texas, and Denny Dawson

of Franklin, Tenn., are in charge of music for the conference.

Pastors' Conference speakers, session by session, will be:

- Sunday, June 10, 6 p.m.: Frank Cox, pastor, North Metro First Church, Lawrenceville, Ga.; Bob Pitman, pastor, Kirby Woods Church, Memphis, Tenn.; Rick Gage, evangelist, Atlanta; and Jerry Falwell, pastor, Thomas Road Church, Lynchburg, Va.

- Monday, June 11, 8:35 a.m.: Randall Jones, pastor, Langston Church, Conway, S.C.; Bobby Moore, pastor, Broadway Church, Southaven; Charles Roesel, pastor, First Church, Leesburg, Fla.; Dan Spencer, pastor, First Church, Thomasville, Ga.

- Monday, June 11, 1:25 p.m.: Philip Robertson, pastor, Philadelphia Church, Deville, La.; Ken Whitten, pastor, Idlewild Church, Tampa, Fla.; Ernest Easley, pastor, First Church, Odessa, Texas; Phil Hoskins, pastor, Higher Ground Church, Kingsport, Tenn.

- Monday, June 11, 6:15 p.m.: Sam Cathey, evangelist, Alexandria, La.; Bobby Welch, pastor, First Church, Daytona Beach, Fla.; Johnny Hunt, pastor, First Church, Woodstock, Ga.; Bailey Smith, evangelist, Atlanta.

Special musical guests include Eddie Middleton, soloist, Atlanta; Paul Jackson, soloist, Little Rock, Ark.; Jim Bob Griffin, music evangelist, Rusk, Texas; Bobby Martin, soloist, Spring, Texas; Danny Wolfe, concert artist, Huntsville, Ala.; Tim Willis, soloist, Dothan, Ala.; Susan Cherry, soloist, Southaven; Lee Snyder and Sons of The Father, music evangelists, West Frankfort, Ill.

## 2001 SBC PASTORS' CONFERENCE

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...to him be glory...for ever and ever  
(Eph. 3:20-21 NIV).

MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 11 • 9:00 a.m.

Topic: Faith and Belief: God's Purpose

Speaker: Dan Spencer



## VBS dates

**Barnes Crossing, Belden:**  
June 4-8; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; J. D. Johnson, pastor.

**Branch, Morton:** June 4-8;  
6-8 p.m.; kickoff event, Sat.,  
June 2, 2-3:30 p.m.



Chandler and The Files

**Highpointe Church, Raymond,** honored its pastor Jerry File and his wife Helen, on Sunday, March 11, with a day of recognition for his 10 years of ministry. He was presented a plaque from Bob Chandler, deacon, pictured on left.

**Coldwater Church, Philadelphia,** will celebrate its 75th anniversary on June 3, beginning at 10:30 a.m. There will be a potluck dinner following the service. Singing will begin at 1:30 p.m. Revival will be held June 1 and 2 at 7 p.m.

Jimmy McClendon will bring the messages and Buck Stovall will lead the music. Mike Ragland is pastor.

"Cherry Street Church, North Delta Association, has been proud recipient of banners for their attendance at M-

Night, Discipleship Rally, and Church Night for many years," said Helen H. Johnson, discipleship training director of the association. Pictured with the circle of banners is Judy Jenkins, director of discipleship training for the church.



Jenkins with banners



Nanney, Daniels, and Zemek

**Bible Drillers of Belden Church, Belden,** (pictured, from left) are Jay Nanney, Brian Daniels, and Bryan Zemek. Donald Baggett is pastor.

**West End Church, West Point,** will host Gerald and Cindy Simmons, Gulfport, for a night of praise and worship on May 13 at 6 p.m. Ken Boyette is pastor.

**First Church, Purvis,** will present Judgement House, 6:15-9:15 p.m., May 23-25. For more information or to make group reservations, call (601) 794-8198.

**CLINTON, Miss. (Special) —** Lloyd Roberts, vice-president for business affairs at Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton, was selected May 3 by the school's board of trustees to serve as interim president of the Baptist-affiliated school while the search begins for the successor to retiring president Howell W. Todd.

Roberts will begin serving in his new post when Todd departs in early July. He will direct the school until trustees conclude their search for a permanent successor to Todd, who announced earlier this year that

he would retire from the presidency due to family concerns.

Roberts, a native of Moss Point, is a graduate of the University of Mississippi in Oxford, where he received undergraduate and graduate degrees in business. He has been a member of the faculty at Mississippi College since 1982 and was named MC's Distinguished Professor in 1984.

He was named dean of the MC School of Business in 1995, where he served until being named vice-president for business affairs in 2000.

"We have seen the dedication

and competence of Dr. Roberts since he came to the vice-president's position, and the board is pleased he would consider serving in this interim capacity," said Harry Vickery, chair of the MC board of trustees.

Todd was out of town due to the hospitalization of his mother in Tennessee, but said in a prepared statement, "The campus will be in good hands with Dr. Roberts. He and I have worked together closely during my seven years here and especially during the past year and a half."

"He knows the institution, its mission, and its culture. Not only does he know the management aspect, but he knows the academic side from serving as a faculty member and dean."

Roberts said that while he is happy to serve the school as interim president, "I certainly have no aspiration for the position on a permanent basis, and I plan to return to my vice president's role upon the selection of a permanent successor to Dr. Todd."

## Homecomings

**Noxapter (Winston):** May 20; 11 a.m. service followed by dinner on the grounds; 1:30 p.m., singing service; Bill Anderson, former pastor, speaker; Keith White, pastor.

**West Shady Grove (Wayne):** June 3; worship, 11 a.m.; noon meal in fellowship hall; Jerry D. Doggett, Mendenhall, guest speaker; Ervin Mooney, pastor.

**Calvary, Pricedale:** June 3; worship service, 10:30 a.m.; lunch; afternoon song and

praise service in fellowship hall; Thomas Wicker, Sallis Church, guest speaker; Harold Gartman, pastor.

**Bethel, Holcomb:** May 27; 11 a.m. service, noon meal, and singing with the Kilgore Sisters and Johnny Little at 1 p.m.

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## STAFF CHANGES

First Church, Biloxi, has called Wayne Pinkerton as church administrator and minister of education. Pinkerton goes to Biloxi from First Church, Greenville, where he served from 1999-2001 as church administrator/minister of education and from 1990-1999 as youth minister. He holds a bachelor of science degree in education from Mississippi State University and a master of education degree from Delta State College.

First Church, Crystal Springs, has called Daniel C. Hall as pastor, effective April 1. His previous place of service was Superior Avenue Church, Bogalusa, La. Hall received his education at Mississippi College, The University of Mississippi, and New Orleans Seminary.

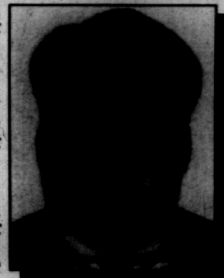
Calvary Church, Canton, has called Tom Rayburn as interim pastor. Rayburn retired from Second Avenue Church, Laurel, in 1994.

Cedarview Church, Olive Branch, has recently called two new staff members. Patrick Ty Huitt, a native of Hermitage, Ark., has been called as the minister to students. Huitt graduated from Arkansas State University and is presently attending Mid-



Huitt

America Seminary. Stephen Womack, a native of Senatobia, has been called as minister of music. Womack is a graduate of Delta State University. He previously served as minister of music at Shaw.



Womack

New Zion Church, Braxton, has called Shane Waldrop as pastor, effective April 15. A native of Arkansas, his previous place of service was at Norwood Church, Norwood, La. as associate pastor. He is presently attending New Orleans Seminary.

## Revival results

Harmony, Crystal Springs: April 22-25; seven professions of faith; Randall Creel, Lake, evangelist; Steve Walker, Pinola, music; Clark Stewart, pastor.

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## REVIVAL DATES

Coldwater, Philadelphia: June 1-2; 7 p.m.; 75-year anniversary celebration will be held Sunday, June 3, 10:30 a.m., followed by a potluck dinner; 1:30 p.m., singing; Jimmy McClendon, evangelist; Buck Stovall, music; Mike Ragland, pastor.

Big Creek (Calhoun): May 21-25; 7 p.m. each night; Donald Way, Duclac, La., evangelist; Steve Parish, Pontotoc, music; Chris Conlee, pastor.

Noxapater (Winston): June 17-20; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:15 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Don Taylor, Conehatta, evangelist; Greg and Michelle Woodward, Tallahassee, Fla., music; Kevin White, pastor.

Trinity, Laurel: May 17-20; Thurs.-Sat., 6:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Don Boone, Louisville, evangelist; Rider's Quartet concert, Friday; Tom Boone, pastor.

Antioch, Columbus: May 20-23; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Johnny Parrack, formerly with the Gold City Quartet, will be leading the revival.

New Zion Church, Liberty: May 20-23; Sunday, 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, evangelist; Shelly & Irene Johnston, music; Ray Quinnelly, pastor.

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## Daughter overnight

WMU will host a GA Mother/Daughter Overnight, June 22-23, 2001 at Camp Garaywa, Clinton. The theme is "I Believe." Cost for the event is \$33 per person (includes meals, lodging, and program fees).

Send parent's name, daughter's name and age, address, phone number, church name, and association along with a check for \$33 per person to WMU, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Deadline to register is June 8, 2001. For more information, please contact Robin Keels at (601) 292-3322 or (800) 748-1651.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Annual meeting of the Blue Mountain College Alumnae Association has been scheduled for May 18-19. Registration will be held at 3 p.m. on Friday in the college administration building. Saturday activities include a breakfast honoring the Fifty-Year Class, business meeting, an address by Bettye Coward, president-elect, a luncheon, and individual class meetings. Friday night accommodations and three meals will be available on campus with advance reservations. For additional information and reservations, call (662) 685-4771, ext. 131.

The Mississippi College (MC) Student Government Association (SGA) presented its annual outstanding faculty award to Melinda Gann of Clinton, assistant professor in the department of mathematics, during the Honors Awards ceremonies on April 24. The purpose of the award is to show the SGA's appreciation, and to recognize excellence among the undergradu-

ate faculty of MC. The recipient must exhibit availability and commitment to student growth; demonstrate high levels of expertise, enthusiasm, and preparedness; set an example for students in their personal and public endeavors; and have a strong commitment to the founding principles and ideals of MC. Her husband, Don Gann, is pastor of Wynndale Church, Terry. Pictured from left are Howell Todd, president of MC; Gann; and Ron Howard, dean of the School of Arts and Sciences.



Todd, Gann, and Howard

## SWBTS pair fails to sign new BFM

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Two theology faculty members

at Southwestern Seminary (SWBTS) in Ft. Worth have indicated they will not sign the Baptist Faith and Message (BFM) as required by the school's bylaws. Jeph Holloway, associate professor of Christian ethics, and Rick Johnson, professor of Old Testament, have told seminary administrators and trustees they could not in good conscience sign the Southern Baptist Convention statement of beliefs as adopted during last June's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Seminary policy prevented the school from announcing which of its faculty had held out from signing the BFM, said Kenneth S. Hemphill, SWBTS president.

However, a news report in

the May 1 edition of the Fort Worth Star-Telegram identified the professors.

"Southwestern Seminary bylaws require all faculty to sign the Baptist Faith and Message as established by our Southern Baptist Convention," Hemphill said. "This is a matter of faithfulness to our bylaws and a matter of integrity to our constituency."

"Signing the Baptist Faith and Message is not a new requirement," Hemphill said. Southwestern professors have signed the current SBC faith statement since the 1950s and have verbally endorsed the statement since it was written in 1925, according to seminary documents.

### MILLIONS ANNOYED

Editor:

Like me, a large number of Americans are annoyed by the U.S. government's policy of sending troops to fight in Iraq. We will not support this war.

Information is needed to help the U.S. government to stop this war. Please contact the U.S. government at (202) 456-4567, or visit the website at www.stopthewar.org.

Thank you for your help in stopping this war.

Yours truly,

John Doe

1234 Main Street, Jackson, MS 39205

Disputed by the U.S. government to visit the U.S. government.

Information about the U.S. government is available at the Center Court of Metrocenter Mall in Jackson on Saturday, May 12, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

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is planning a 75th anniversary celebration on June 1. We need help with

addresses of former pastors and members. Send addresses to Anita Winstead, 16580 Hwy. 21 South, Philadelphia, MS 39360, or call (601) 656-6122 (work) or 656-6757 (home).

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# FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

## Finding forgiveness

Luke 15:1-32

By Lori Clendinning

In 1940, the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention published "The Broadman Hymnal," under the watchcare of editor B.B. McKinney. A prolific hymn-writer, McKinney joined forces with Mabel Frost to produce hymn #436, "Come Home."

No longer in contemporary hymnals, this hymn captures the essence behind this week's lesson which focuses on the parable of the prodigal son:

"O soul in the far-away country; A-weary and famished, and sad; There's rest in the home of thy Father; His welcome will make thy heart glad..."

Arise and come back to thy Father; He'll meet thee while yet on the way; Assured of His tender compassion; Oh, why wilt thou longer delay?

Although thou hast sinned against heaven; And weak and unworthy may be; He offers thee full restoration; And pardon abundant and free.

Come home, come home. Oh, why will you longer roam? Come home, come home. O prodigal child, come home."

Luke 15:1-32, although often called "the parable of the prodigal son," focuses on both of the sons. Equally, if not more, important is the loving, patient, watchful care of the father and his rejoicing over the return of his penitent son.

This parable follows two others dealing with lost, sought, and found objects: the lost sheep, verses 4-7, and the lost coin, verses 8-10. Jesus' sympathy for the socially banished and morally lost was undoubtedly seen through these two parables and



Clendinning

focused on the feelings of those who had lost their precious possessions.

So, why now a third parable touching upon the same subject? In the other two, Jesus has said nothing of the inward experience of the lost items, as they are mere objects. Thus, he now adds a third parable, to

clarify and complement his instruction concerning a sinner's rescue, focusing now on the sinner's emotional state of being.

The bereft shepherd seeking sheep and the impoverished woman searching for her only gold coin now become the compassionate and yearning father; the strayed sheep and the lost coin, a wayward son. The finding of this lost son highlights the end process of a sinner's repentance and return to God.

Perhaps chief among all the parables, this one is most expressive of God's love regarding a lost, wandering, unconverted soul. It reflects the Heavenly Father's great yearning to have his lost children return to his loving care.

The watchful father denotes God, Father, via creation, of all men. The two sons represent two classes of men. Present during Christ's time, the Pharisee and the publican, were most likely the initial two types from whom comparisons could be drawn. In contemporary times, the class distinction can be made regarding the church person and the unchurched person.

Like the publican, the unchurched person is often most readily identified as the "sinner." The sinful state of the Pharisees, like many church people, is less evident as they are busy about "God's work," perhaps never facing up to (or living in denial of) their separation from God.

People in today's world have little or no concept of sin and repentance. Whatever is self-gratifying is pursued at any cost, by any means. Upon confrontation with God's word, some people acknowledge their sin and struggle with their guilt, yet still wonder whether God can forgive the depth of their wrongdoing.

Often, this is the same question Christians have regarding their own post-conversion sin. Some struggle with belief as to whether God can, or wants to, restore them to a close relationship with him.

The Bible reveals God's lovingkindness and graciousness. When unbelievers repent of their sins and ask him to forgive them, he redeems them from sin. Believers who repent are restored to a vital relationship with him. He deeply wants people to seek and to accept his forgiveness.

God forgives repentant people, regardless of their sin. As someone recently wrote, there is no "exception list" nailed to the cross. Jesus died for all people, and like the loving father in the parable of the prodigal son, God longs for all of his children to return home. He stands ever-watchful to open his loving arms and receive each one unto him.

"Come home, come home. O prodigal child, come home."

Clendinning is a former newspaper editor and a member of Park Place Church, Pearl.

# EXPLORE THE BIBLE

## Survival

1 Samuel 21:1-24:22

By Jim Burnett

One of the hottest television programs airing today is "Survivor." A group of people is taken to a remote location where each participant competes against one another under adverse conditions. Upon the completion of a battery of tests and obstacle courses, the person most mentally and physically fit wins and is ultimately deemed the survivor.

David was a survivor. Over and over again he experienced personal crisis from fighting and defeating a giant to surviving the numerous murderous attempts of a jealous King by the name of Saul. But how did David do it? How did he keep his sanity in the midst of the craziness?

And how did he keep his faith while experiencing Saul's fury? The answer is David's

faith in God did not change with his circumstances, no matter how awful they seemed at times.

**Desperate measures (21:1a, 10).** Sometimes, we, as God's children, are put in some difficult situations requiring radical actions. David's will to live led him to deceive Ahimelech, the priest at Nob, into helping him.

David received bread and the sword of Goliath. Then he proceeded to King Achish at Gath, home of the slain giant. Again David resorted to deceit, disguising himself before the king as a madman, scribbling on the doors of the gate and slobbering at the mouth.

David's dramatic performance before the king perhaps saved his life. But were David's lying and deceptive actions with Ahimelech and Achish morally right?



Burnett

There are times when God's people find themselves between a rock and a hard place, forcing them to use desperate measures. Perhaps it is a job situation where a boss is being unethical, forcing you to leave. Or maybe an unhealthy relationship forces you to sever ties with someone.

But whatever the situation, we must never compromise the standards of Christ and the clear biblical teachings of the Bible. Although David's motive to live is understandable, God did not condone his deceptive actions.

**Unexpected encouragement (22:1-2).** As David reached the cave of Aduilam he must have been exhausted physically and mentally. But soon his brothers and his father's household came and rallied around him in support. Then four hundred more people came to David's aid. The four hundred quickly turned into six hundred. Can you imagine how this show of support must have encouraged David and built his confidence?

Perhaps today you are facing a crisis in your life and need encouragement. God is completely aware of your situation and will send encouragers. There may be a letter in the mailbox today; your phone may ring tonight; a visitor may drop by tomorrow. Many times in my ministry, I have been pleasantly surprised by a church member's note of support. The unexpected encouragement came at the right time.

**Bitter betrayal (23:19-23).** David and his 600 men found refuge in the wilderness, hiding in the ravines and caves. The Ziphites, however, revealed to Saul, David's location. Why did they do this? Perhaps the Ziphites saw an opportunity to gain some clout with the king. Whatever the reason, David was bitterly betrayed.

Have you ever had someone violate your trust? Perhaps the perpetrator was a Christian friend or maybe a Christian family member. When the world hurts us, we are not surprised. But when a Christian betrays us, it is a bitter pill to swallow.

If you have been offended or betrayed by someone, let me encourage you to take your pain and hurt to Jesus. Otherwise, Satan will nourish your bitter root of betrayal, robbing you of God's joy.

**Unbending integrity (24:4-6).** Have you ever had the opportunity to pay someone back for the hurt they caused you and didn't? David had a "chance of a lifetime" to retaliate against Saul as he stood next to him in the cave. In minds of David's supporters, Saul deserved death.

But David's life was under the domination of God's Holy Spirit. Consequently, he restrained himself from harming Saul, God's anointed one. Thus David honored God before his men and Saul's army. David's unbending integrity humbled Saul to tears.

May we all, as God's children, always choose the higher road in our dealings with others, even those who mistreat us. In doing so, God is honored and the proud are humbled.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standard forms provided by the newspaper. All articles should be submitted in duplicate. No articles will be accepted over the telephone.

THE BAPTIST

Record

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed return envelope.



# Cancer, wife's illness don't detour Piland

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — An October 1999 diagnosis of stage four brain cancer with a prognosis of 60-90 days to live not only gave Harry Piland an opportunity to demonstrate his

worst kind of brain tumor, glioblastoma. Even if the tumor were successfully removed, that type of cancer always returns, he was told.

"Even in that moment, I

gathered my family around me" — his son David; daughter Vicki Piland Wilson; daughter-in-law Camille; and two granddaughters.

"We joined hands and gave it all to the Father," Piland said. "He was so tender to me and his presence was so plain and so real to me all of that time."

"Never give up. There's always hope. The Lord is always with you," Piland said from his apartment in a Brentwood, Tenn., assisted living facility.

He moved there in early 2001 to be near Pat Piland, his wife of 52 years, who resides in the Alzheimer's unit in the same building.

"I said to the Lord, 'Lord, my wife needs me so bad. If you could just give me a few additional years I would be so grateful — and, Lord, I've got some arrows left in my quiver. I want to give everything I can to you — 100%.

"If you spare me and can give me a little longer, I'll live the time for you.' I wasn't bargaining with the Lord. I was asking him to bless me, and he did."

Exactly how the blessing took place, Piland doesn't know. He just knows that God did it.

Immediately after Piland's surgery, his pastor, Rick White of First Church, Franklin, Tenn., visited his hospital room, anointed him with oil, and he and other staff members spent most of one night praying with Piland.

He also knows from messages he has received that thousands of people throughout the world were praying for him.

In addition, he has participated in a clinical trial of new drugs that shut down the blood flow to cancer cells. For 18 months after the surgery, 15 brain scans were clear.

The April 2001 scan raised concerns of doctors, who couldn't detect whether the problem is a return of the tumor, a result of radiation, or something else. However, they elected to treat the abnormality aggressively as if the tumor had returned.

That decision has Piland's full support, along with his desire for the continuing prayers of friends and family.

At Brighton Gardens, the couple share their meals and spend hours together each day. Pat participates in activities she needs to keep her as active as possible.

"Every day that I am here I realize this is what God wanted me to do," Piland said.

"When I stood at that marriage altar, I made a promise to Pat — richer or poorer, in sickness and in health.

"I made a promise we were going to be together until death do us part.

"That's a promise I intend to keep. I'm going to be with that beautiful girl as long as I live."

Piland considers Brighton Gardens an added part of his mission field. He's trying to learn everyone's name and looks for opportunities to witness and minister.

"I have found we are able to be a witness — both of us — in this place. Her witness has not ended either. When I have people come in to hear her sing, she just beams.

"When I give a witness, she gets in on it too, though she's limited in what she can say.

"This is my mission field. Wherever we are, we are to bloom where we are planted," Piland said.

When he tells his story, Piland always asks, "Do you have a father, mother, sister, brother, or loved one who has a tumor or who has Alzheimer's? Do you have no hope?"

"I am standing here saying there is hope for you. We serve a God of hope.

"He is not only a supernatural God who does miracles, but he wants you to believe and have hope in him."



BACK SOON — Harry Piland gives his wife Pat, who is battling Alzheimer's disease, a hug in leaving for a weekly Thursday evening Bible study. (Photo by Morris Abernathy)

faith in God, but also gave him an enlarged ministry to proclaim a message of hope.

Piland, who from 1978 to 1994 directed the Sunday School division for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention (then called the Sunday School Board), recalled the chill that went down his spine when a doctor told him he had the

## 75 years of book store contributions celebrated

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — LifeWay Christian Stores is celebrating 75 years of service and ministry.

LifeWay Christian Stores President Mark Scott listed various highlights of the stores' 75-year history during an April 27 chapel service at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tenn.:

- 1925: The Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources) of the Southern Baptist Convention purchased the Baptist Book Concern in Louisville, Ky.

- 1930s: Difficult situations with the U.S. economy made some people question the wisdom of keeping the stores, but wiser heads prevailed and the bookstores survived.

- 1940s: The stores continued to grow and added film rentals to their product mix in what would be a forerunner of the stores' video sales.

- 1952: The chain had grown to 44 stores.

- 1972: In a novel experiment, the Sunday School Board opened two new concept stores called Lifeway Stores, at that time spelled with a small "w."

While the stores closed a few years later, the Sunday School Board had ownership of and later registered the LifeWay name.

"Even then, before anyone had thought about changing the name of the Sunday School Board, God was working through the event that, at the time, seemed to be a failure. Through that apparent failure, we owned the Lifeway name," Scott recounted. "If we look at Romans 8:28, we can't look at anything as a failure, because any apparent failure can be used by God to become a tremendous success."

- 1992: The chain had grown to 63 stores.
- 1999: The stores changed names from Baptist Book Stores to LifeWay Christian Stores, conducting business through retail

stores, online, catalog, and direct sales.

- 2001: LifeWay Christian Stores will open its 100th store this summer.

Scott said that in looking toward the future of LifeWay Christian Stores, "Our dreams must be greater than our memories.

"We want God to work through our LifeWay Christian Store employees, allowing us to be a catalytic change agent in our country.

"We want to have an impact on people's lives."

Praising LifeWay Stores employees for their attitudes of ministry, as well as their commitment to customer service, Scott said, "We never want to be so busy that we don't have time to minister to our customers.

"If God doesn't work through us, we will fail, but we have faith that he is using us and will be with us in the future," Scott said.

Linda Jackson, a LifeWay Christian Store regional director whose 35-year career began in the Birmingham, Ala., store, spoke about her experiences.

For every Christian, she observed, there are "defining moments when you see God working and you recognize his work with such clarity."

She said one of those moments occurred for her several years ago. "I was driving in to work and asked God, 'Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?'"

"I realized as I was standing in the bookstore in that early morning time before anyone else was there that in this place. I felt safe and comforted. God gave me calmness and a peace and I just knew this was where I belonged."

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS — LifeWay Christian Stores President Mark Scott listed some of the highlights of the Baptist bookstore chain's 75-year history during a special service April 27 in Nashville, Tenn. (Photo by Tom Tjornehoj)

### Bibliocipher

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KH WKDW VDFULIFHWK  
XQWR DQB JRG, VDYH  
XQWR WKH ORUG  
RQOB, KH VKDOO EH  
XWWHUOB GHVWURB-  
HG.

HARGXV WZHQB-WZR:

WZHQB

Clue: X = U

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Fifty-Two: Ten.